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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002361

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NEA/ELA FOR MATTHEW IRWIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2017

TAGS: [EUN](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [LE](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: MFA ON POTENTIAL LEBANON-SYRIA BORDER
MISSION

REF: A. STATE 128335

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2348

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Carl Siebentritt for reason
s 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) We pulsed Turkish MFA Middle East Department desk officer Cem Ulusoy regarding the Spanish proposal on a potential ESDP monitoring mission on the Lebanon-Syria border (ref A). Professing no knowledge of the Spanish proposal, Ulusoy said Turkey shares USG concerns about weapons smuggling from Syria to Lebanon and noted that Turkey has a vested interest in the security situation in Lebanon, particularly in light of the fact that Turkish military personnel are deployed on the ground in Lebanon and in the Mediterranean as part of UNIFIL. Ulusoy noted that Turkey is currently considering a UN request for an additional corvette in support of UNIFIL's maritime component.

[1](#)2. (C) In principle, Turkey would support any border monitoring force that has the consent of both Lebanon and Syria, according to Ulusoy. While agreeing that any potential mission should be more Lebanon-oriented, he emphasized that Syria's sensitivities will need to be taken into account given Damascus' ability to shape events in Lebanon, particularly in the run up to the election period. Turkey's approach with Syria continues to focus on steering Damascus to play a constructive role in Lebanon. Ulusoy commented that Syrian attitudes as reflected in recent bilateral contacts, including Syrian FM Mouallem's September 9 visit to Ankara (ref B), suggest to Ankara that Damascus is beginning to recognize that stability in Lebanon is in Syria's own interest.

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